CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS to combat wildlife crime in NAMIBIA

Demonstrating the benefits of strong conservation partnerships
There is always somebody somewhere willing to poach; there is always some animal in some place vulnerable; if there is a market*, someone will try to supply it (*a market being an opportunity to make money). Criminals adapt when things get difficult. An increasing range of species is targeted; new areas are constantly sought; intricate criminal syndicates operate across borders and the globe. Combatting wildlife crime is extremely difficult and complex. No cure-all solutions exist. Criminals adapt when things get difficult. An increasing range of species is targeted; new areas are constantly sought; intricate criminal syndicates operate across borders and the globe. Combatting wildlife crime is extremely difficult and complex. No cure-all solutions exist.

Partnerships are at the forefront of combating wildlife crime.

**SIX KEY INGREDIENTS TO COMBAT WILDLIFE CRIME IN NAMIBIA**

- Active sharing of information and other resources
- Fast and flexible funding
- Strategic planning and innovative action
- Ongoing adaptation to changing threats and needs
- Use of all available technologies & tools
- Strong partnership networks

**ORGANISATIONS COLLABORATING IN NAMIBIA:**

Photo: Okonjima Nature Reserve

- Namibian government institutions
- Anti-Corruption Commission – ACC
- Financial Intelligence Centre – FIC
- Ministry of Defence – MD
- Namibian Defence Force – NDF
- Namibian Army
- Ministry of Environment & Tourism – MET
- Wildlife Protection Services Unit – WPSU
- Intelligence & Investigations Unit – IIU
- Game Products Trust Fund – GPTF
- Ministry of Finance – MF
- Directorate Customs & Excise
- Ministry of Home Affairs & Immigration – MHAI
- Ministry of Justice – MJ
- Ministry of Safety & Security – MSS
- Namibian Police Force – Nampol
- Protected Resources Division – PRD
- Serious Crime Unit – SCU
- Special Field Force – SFF
- Office of the Attorney-General – AG
- Office of the Prosecutor-General – PG

International linkages

- Governments of Angola, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia & Zimbabwe
- International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime – ICCWC
- Interpol
- United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime – UNODC
- World Bank Group – WBG
- World Customs Organisation – WCO

Rural communities

- Rural communities
- Communal conservancies
- Communal farmers
- Freehold conservancies
- Freehold farmers
- Rhino custodians

Non-Government Organisations

- Integrated Rural Development & Nature Conservation – IRDNC
- Intelligence Support Against Poaching – ISAP
- Legal Assistance Centre – LAC
- Namibia Nature Foundation – NNF
- Rooikat Trust
- Save the Rhino Trust – SRT
- WWF In Namibia

Umbrella organisations

- Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations – NACSO
- Namibian Chamber of Environment – NCE

Industry

- Business community
- Mining industry
- Tourism & conservation-hunting industries

International funding agencies

- Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs, USA – INL
- Global Environment Facility – GEF
- Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau – KfW
- United States Agency for International Development – USAID
- Wildcat Foundation
- WWF
A history of restoration – countering a legacy of decimation

Since independence, Namibia has actively nurtured a culture of collaboration, especially in the conservation sector. This has enabled environmental restoration and wide scale wildlife recoveries – countering a colonial legacy of decimation. The systems are not perfect. Conservation efforts can still be strengthened and law enforcement improved. Some natural resource sectors still require urgent attention (e.g. forestry, fisheries).

Pre-Independence
- Decimation of large wildlife in 1700s & 1800s
- White rhino locally extinct in Namibia before 1900 (reduced to < 50 animals in South Africa by 1895)
- Black rhino reduced to remote, isolated populations
- Elephant reduced to remote, isolated populations
- Large predators reduced to remote, isolated populations
- Apartheid isolated Namibia & South Africa from the international community
- Homeland policies isolated communities
- Very limited economic development in homelands
- No access to or benefits from wildlife
- No incentives to conserve natural resources
- No input into conservation decisions
- Growth of government conservation structures & expansion of protected areas from 1950s, leading to recovery of rare species in parks
- Rights over wildlife for freehold farmers in 1960s, leading to recovery of wildlife on freehold land
- Rampant poaching for ivory & rhino horn in 1970s & ‘80s (with South African apartheid military involvement)
- Start of community game guard system to combat poaching in 1980s

Post-Independence
- Biodiversity conservation & sustainable use entrenched in constitution of Namibia
- Inclusive conservation legislation in mid-1990s
- Rights over wildlife for communal farmers through formation of communal conservancies in mid-1990s, leading to recovery of wildlife on communal land
- Targeted rebuilding of wildlife populations through government-NGO-community partnerships
- Reinroduction of white rhino to state parks & freehold land (private ownership possible)
- Growth & range expansion of black rhino through Rhino Custodianship Scheme (government retains ownership)
- Natural growth & range expansion of elephant (± 7,000 in 1995 to > 20,000 today)
- Natural growth & range expansion of lion
- Rebuilding of populations of most historically occurring species in national parks, on freehold & communal land
- Viable populations of almost all historically occurring large mammals

The widespread conservation successes since independence were enabled through strong partnerships between government, international funding agencies, local NGOs, tourism & conservation-hunting industries & rural communities.
The poaching explosion of the new millennium – in Namibia

Rhino and elephant poaching in Africa ...

- Rhino poaching rampant across Africa from 1970s
- Reduction of black rhino population from ± 100,000 in 1960 to ± 2,500 in 1995
- Angola, Botswana & Zambia rhinos reduced to remnant populations, Zimbabwe rhino severely impacted
- South Africa & Namibia initially little affected, enabling significant rebuilding of populations in these countries over past three decades
- South Africa targeted from 2007
- Namibia targeted from 2012

- Elephant poaching rampant across Africa in 1970s & 80s with South African (apartheid) military involvement
- Start of community conservation programme in 1980s
- Active rebuilding of most wildlife populations over past three decades, including elephant, rhinos, lion, leopard, cheetah, hyenas, giraffe, antelopes, crocodile
- Commercial poaching reduced to negligible levels after independence
- Namibia increasingly targeted by poaching syndicates from 2012
- Rapid escalation of rhino & elephant poaching
- Increasing poaching/trafficking of other species
- Namibian pangolin poaching recognized as major problem from 2014 (pangolin believed to be most trafficked wild animal in the world); current status of Namibian pangolin population uncertain
- Lion, leopard & cheetah targeted (regular confiscation of skins)
- Reptiles, esp. crocodile, snakes & tortoises targeted
- Birds & bird’s eggs targeted (e.g. carmine bee-eaters at colonies)
- Indigenous/endemic plants targeted for both live trade & timber

Southern Africa and Namibia have clearly become targets since poaching in other areas has become less profitable.

Namibia has been increasingly targeted by organised poaching syndicates since 2012, leading to a rapid escalation of rhino and elephant poaching and increasing poaching and trafficking of other species.

The trade in ivory, rhino horn and other wildlife products is an ancient practice, with a modern criminal edge. Wildlife products are not new commodities (although new uses are being promoted, especially in food and medicine). Through international treaties and national legislation, a clear distinction has been made between legal wildlife use and wildlife crime. Combatting wildlife crime is a fight against ancient markets and entrenched supply chains – now with huge illicit profits.

An ancient practice with a modern edge
Namibia’s response to the crisis

A timeline of mobilisation

2010 First rhino poaching awareness meetings in response to poaching increase in South Africa

2011 Rhino Ranger Incentive Programme to appoint & train local rhino rangers initiated in Erongo–Kunene by SRT, IRDNC, NNF & Minnesota Zoo

2012 First rhino & elephant poaching cases in Namibia; initial disjointed efforts by private sector, NGOs & government

2012-18 Various civil society initiatives including ISAP, some with limited stakeholder engagement & mixed results

2013-17 Exploration of technical measures, information networks & innovative actions to counter wildlife crime by MET & NGOs; with Google funding

2014-17 Waterberg Law Enforcement & Training Centre established & various technical support provided through MET’s GEF-funded PASS project

2015 Discovery of high number of rhino carcasses in Etosha, some dating back a year or more

2015 MET urges NGOs & civil society to collaborate to coordinate anti-poaching efforts

2015-18 Numerous public demonstrations & awareness campaigns to highlight plight of rhinos

2016 Deployment of Nampol SFF & NDF in Etosha & northeastern parks to support rare species protection

2016 Development of MET law enforcement strategy in consultation with NGOs

2016 Cabinet creates National Wildlife Security Committee (9 ministries represented)

2016 WWF secures funding (3 yrs) to support various rhino conservation & security activities & create NGO Support Structure (NGOSS) to serve MET & conservation NGOs

2016 NGOSS established & specialist staff employed

2016 National needs assessment undertaken, resulting in INL funding (2 yrs) to support government & NGO activities to combat wildlife crime

2016 MET helicopter purchased through private funding

2016 Celebritie digital forensics technology secured

2016 Kunene Rhino Pride Campaign initiated in Erongo–Kunene by SRT, IRDNC & Minnesota Zoo to engage with rural communities

2016-17 MET Wildlife Protection Services Unit & Intelligence & Investigations Unit created & staffed

2017 USAID Combating Wildlife Crime Project initiated, focussing on KAZA & Namibia (5 yrs)

2017 WWF, NNF & IAC partner to support investigations & prosecutions with INL-2 funding

2017 NCE initiates pangolin reward scheme

2017 Change in national wildlife laws to significantly increase penalties for serious wildlife crimes

2017 Rooikat Trust established to support investigations & prosecutions with funding from Wildcat Foundation

2018 Operation Blue Rhino initiated, formalising collaboration between Nampol PRD & SCU & MET IIU, endorsed by Nampol Inspector General, with dedicated staff seconded to operations, with support from NDF & RIC

2018 NNF & SRT, WWF & Rooikat support anti-poaching, investigations & prosecutions with INL-3 funding

2018 Rooikat Trust supports dedicated state prosecutors for wildlife crime cases with funding from Wildcat Foundation

2018 Patrol effort of Erongo–Kunene Rhino Rangers & partners increased to 1,200% of 2012 levels, when poaching began (no cases recorded in area in 2018)

Ready for crisis? Not immediately... But since clear roles and strategies have been defined, Namibia has created effective systems with impressive results.
A complex juggling act of collaboration

Conservation of rare and valuable species, such as pangolin, rhino and elephant, is a juggling act, easily upset by the impacts of wildlife crime. These species are already affected by habitat fragmentation, indiscriminate killing (pangolin), human–wildlife conflict (elephant) and international pressures inhibiting their conservation value (rhinos and elephant). Reduced conservation rewards increase the difficulties of anti-poaching efforts. By ensuring broad awareness of the complexity of conservation and law enforcement, linkages and partnerships are strengthened and the juggling act can be turned into a stable structure that ensures healthy wildlife populations – and healthy livelihoods.

Building the foundations
- Decades of community-based conservation result in significant community benefits, pride & trust
- Decades of strengthening conservation partnerships, result in sound conservation systems
- Sustainable use strengthens the value of wildlife
- Active rebuilding of wildlife populations results in healthy populations of historically occurring species

Countering the crisis
- Full government commitment with NGO, CBO, private sector & civil society support
- Evaluation of threats & needs
- Creation of linkages & partnerships
- Rapid increase in targeted law-enforcement efforts
- Short-term funding solutions through collaboration between government, NGOs, private sector & international funding agencies
- Awareness creation amongst judiciary of seriousness & impacts of wildlife crime
- Awareness creation amongst rural communities of livelihood impacts of wildlife crime
- Use of all available technologies
- Flexible funding immediately available for interventions

Consolidating partnerships and systems
- Strengthening of partnerships between government, NGOs, CBO, private sector & rural communities
- Active collaboration between all relevant agencies within government
- Long-term partnerships with funding agencies
- Active collaboration between field staff & rural communities
- Strong support from rural communities (information)
- Active collaboration between law enforcement & judiciary (strong prosecution cases)
- Broad public support (awareness, public pressure, funding)
- Identification & addressing of clear funding targets, training & equipment needs & gaps
- Increasingly effective investigations, law enforcement & prosecutions resulting in appropriate penalties
- Parallel conservation & law enforcement efforts

Expanding international linkages
- Increasing law-enforcement collaboration with neighbouring countries
- Strengthening of all international conservation & law enforcement linkages
Partnerships from the field to the courtroom to the global arena...

Namibia’s many-tiered collaboration for cross-cutting results

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FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE CENTRE
Partnerships across all sectors are making a clear difference...

Namibian partnerships keys

SIX KEYS TO UNLOCKING PARTNERSHIPS IN NAMIBIA

• Comprehensive government engagement
• Full acknowledgement of the contribution of all stakeholders
• Clear roles and responsibilities at all levels
• Active sharing of information and other resources
• Flexible funding and minimal red tape

PARTNERSHIPS ARE ABOUT RECOGNITION, FLEXIBILITY AND TRUST

Recognising the individual
• Clear delegation of personal responsibility
• Respect for the role of each person
• Acknowledgement of the value of each contribution
• Due rewards for effort & risk

Clear, acknowledged roles of all stakeholders
• Recognition of defined roles at both individual & organisational levels
• Recognition of importance of transboundary collaboration
• Recognition of importance of international linkages
• Acknowledgement of the value of each contribution

Formalised collaboration
• Full support to the mandate of government to act as the primary law enforcement entity
• Acknowledged collaboration between all conservation & law enforcement entities
• Formalised regional collaboration
• Formalised international collaboration

Flexible funding
• Minimal restrictions on use of funds
• Immediate mobilisation of funds for action or reward, directly to field operation level
• Healthy mix of funding between government, international & local funds
• Clear overall funding structure that coordinates funding sources & targets & identifies gaps

Awareness, training and technical support
• Pride in both conservation & collaboration
• Clear understanding of aims
• Clear understanding of capacity & funding needs
• Timeous addressing of capacity or funding gaps

TRUST
• Trust in the integrity & competence of the individual
• Trust in the integrity & competence of each institution
• Trust in the suitability of strategies & actions
• Trust in the strength of partnerships
Technologies & tools ... and how they are being used in Namibia

Field information
- Monitoring & surveillance
- Anonymous community reporting
- Investigation information

Forensics
- Crime scene analysis
- DNA analysis
- Digital intelligence
- Financial intelligence

Monitoring, analysis and planning tools
- UNODC Wildlife & Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit
- Namibian Wildlife Crime Database Analysis Tool (interactive mapping, identification of patterns, hotspots)
- Crime prediction & response

Strategic and flexible funding
- Funding Control & Management Tool
- Wildlife Crimes Budget Manager

Reduced crime rewards and appropriate penalties
- Appropriate fines & prison sentences
- Refusal of bail whenever possible
- Blocking of local markets & international routes

Conservation incentives
- Conducive legislation to motivate conservation
- Market incentives for wildlife management
- Technical support structures

Targeted training
- Waterberg Law Enforcement & Training Centre
- Field training & national workshops
- International training & exchange

General awareness creation
- Conservation & law enforcement awareness of threats
- Rural community pride & involvement
- Awareness of the distinction between wildlife crime and legal wildlife use
- General public awareness & support

The overall objective is to ensure healthy wildlife populations through effective conservation and law enforcement.
Some Namibian statistics ...

RHINO CARCASSES FOUND

- Erongo–Kunene Community Conservation Area
- Etosha & other national parks
- Freehold land

Total 51
Total 65
Total 2
Total 11
Total 56
Total 97
Total 61

Some Namibian statistics ...

RHINO POACHING

- Once poaching began, rapid escalation occurred, identifying initially easy targets
- Establishment of strong partnerships & systems enabled increasingly effective responses
- Coordinated effort clearly reduced impacts, first in Erongo–Kunene, then Etosha (Etosha has the highest number of rhinos in Namibia & will always be a target)
- Impacts have shifted to easier targets elsewhere
- Impacts on freehold land are now showing a rapid increase & need immediate attention
- Overall impacts have remained high at 50 or more animals over the last five years

PANGOLIN TRAFFICKING

- Increased pangolin trafficking (live & skins) was recognised from 2014, but initially difficult to counter
- A targeted awareness campaign & reward scheme for information leading to arrests shows impressive results from its inception in 2017
- A system of monitoring & releasing recovered live pangolins is in place
- Other wildlife products (especially predator skins) are often being seized during pangolin operations, indicating an increasing threat to other species

WIDEWELD CRIME ARRESTS (all categories)

- The 2015 increase in arrests is related to the discovery of rampant rhino poaching in Etosha
- The establishment of dedicated operations units & coordinated law enforcement efforts clearly show results from 2017 onwards
- Arrest often include the seizure of illicit items, especially ivory, rhino horn & weapons; it is not always easy to confirm the origin of these, making the analysis of ivory & rhino horn data very complex

Notes

Statistics of poaching impacts are particularly difficult to represent, as not all cases are recorded, or there may be a significant time lag between a poaching event and its discovery (sometimes of years). Arrests and seizures can indicate an increase in law enforcement, an increase in criminal activity, or a combination of both.

FIREARM SEIZURES

- The establishment of Operation Blue Rhino & increased law enforcement efforts clearly show results
- Other weapons, vehicles, tools & other items (knives, machetes, hacksaws etc.) are also being seized
History shows a grim picture of leapfrogging decimation, intervention and rebuilding of populations – followed by renewed decimation in ever-diminishing cycles. Conservation, law enforcement and crime prevention need to become much more innovative, effective and deeply entrenched to ensure the safeguarding of biodiversity in a rapidly changing world.

Understand evolving crime
- Crime methods are continually & rapidly evolving
- Crime focus always shifts to areas of least resistance
- While many markets are culturally entrenched, new markets are also being established
- Wildlife crime must be recognised as an economic crime

Motivate conservation efforts
- Balance the high cost & risk of conservation with more diverse rewards, especially outside parks
- Maximise the economic, social & cultural values of wildlife
- Highlight the distinction between legal and illegal wildlife use
- Strengthen national sense of pride & environmental identity

Improve crime prevention
- Improve pre-emptive action that intercepts criminals before losses occur
- Expand & integrate the use of all available technologies
- Improve data collection & analysis & share information more actively to enable more proactive interventions

Expand collaboration to other sectors
- Improve private sector protection of valuable species through increased collaboration
- Expand law enforcement effectiveness across all Namibian environmental sectors (e.g. forestry, fisheries) to safeguard habitats & improve overall environmental health
- Target local linkages with other crime sectors (drugs, money laundering etc.)

Increase international collaboration
- Increase impacts higher up the crime chain (traffic routes, end markets) through international collaboration
- Target international linkages with other crime sectors (drugs, money laundering etc.)
- Use the legislation of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act more effectively
- Ensure that conservation & law enforcement partnerships reach from wildlife in its environment to the destination countries & end markets

We need to reduce the funds & effort spent on combating wildlife crime and free these for conservation and human development.
Why do we need partnerships against crime?

WE NEED PARTNERSHIPS BECAUSE ...

Criminals have an edge
- They can act without rules & regulations
- They strike quickly when it suits them (at night, on public holidays etc.)
- They get direct, individual rewards for their efforts
- They can operate beyond all boundaries
- They can get rich quickly

Authorities can be cumbersome
- They need to adhere to rules & regulations
- They often have inflexible structures & systems
- Individuals are often not recognised, salaries are often too low & rewards are indirect
- Working across boundaries is challenging

Partnerships remove the edge by ...
- Significantly increasing the risk for criminals, especially when faced with a vigilant civil society
- Sharing the workload & costs of conservation & law enforcement
- Sharing information & other resources
- Facilitating improved collaboration within organisations
- Enabling joint action between agencies & across boundaries
- Greatly increasing flexibility & reducing reaction time
- Enabling a consolidated conservation & law enforcement effort
- Improving conservation outcomes while reducing wildlife crime

... WE CAN ALL MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

What individuals can do
- Publicly condemn all illegal activities
- Never buy dubious or illegal animal or plant products
- Report any suspicious activities
- Support all legal activities that strengthen conservation (tourism, conservation hunting, indigenous plant products)

What conservation organisations can do
- Work together to strengthen conservation results
- Create strong linkages with international organisations
- Ensure enough funding reaches field operations
- Ensure full support of government mandates
- Reinforce the distinction between legal and illegal wildlife use
- Share information as widely as possible

What funding agencies can do
- Work together to ensure funding needs are met
- Provide targeted funding to fill gaps
- Ensure that reporting requirements don’t inhibit efficiency
- Provide support at local, regional & global levels

What governments can do
- Make conservation of biodiversity a national priority
- Treat wildlife crime as an economic crime
- Improve inter-ministerial collaboration & information sharing
- Promote partnerships between all sectors
- Share information as widely as possible
- Curb corruption

What do we need partnerships against crime? and what options are there for additional action and support?

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Namibian Partnerships Against Crime is a broad collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, private sector, rural communities, international funding agencies and the public. All constructive input and collaboration are welcomed.

The production of this brochure was coordinated by the Rooikat Trust and funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs, USA.